

HOW TO APPLY FOR A BUILDING PERMIT

HOW TO APPLY FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OVERVIEW

Follow our step-by-step guide:

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- Step 3: Getting Approvals for Your Project from the Department of Building Safety
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- Post-Occupancy Concerns

The following guide walks you through the steps to obtain a building permit in Nashua, whether you are replacing a water heater, putting up a sign, opening a restaurant, opening a hairdressing salon, building a development, or building a new home. You are helping to build the future of the City of Nashua and we want to make the process as painless as possible while assisting you with your project.

The building permit application is called a Building and Land Use Permit Application because it includes both the Department of Building Safety and Planning Department's requirements and makes it so that you only have to fill out one form. We have two types of Building and Land Use Permit Applications:

1. One and two family structure application
2. Multi-family or commercial structures

Besides this permit, you may need to fill out other permit applications (such as electrical, mechanical, plumbing, etc.) and you may need certain approvals from various boards and commissions or approvals from other departments in the City. This guide is updated

Where do I get a building permit?

Come to the Community Development Division (which includes the Department of Building Safety and the Planning Department) at City Hall, 229 Main Street in Downtown Nashua. We are on the second floor and are open M-F 8am-5pm. You can also call us at (603) 589-3080.

Where do I find your forms?

Many of our forms are online. Go to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CDDFormsandStudies/tabid/1016/Default.aspx> for a comprehensive list of all forms in the Community Development Division. Step 2 and step 3 have additional information and links to these forms.

Why do I need a building permit?

Building permits help regulate construction to protect our residents, our environment, and property values in Nashua. More than that, pulling a building permit is the law. Working without a permit is not only against the law, but will result in fines, surcharge fees, and additional penalties. It may endanger you, those building the project, neighbors, or future owners of the building. If you fail to get a permit, you may need to demolish and restart a project or make adjustments so the construction conforms to the code, costing you time and money. If you sell your house and have worked without permits or have an insurance claim for that work, you may encounter additional problems. In case of fire or other catastrophes, not having your work done to code not only puts your life in danger, but the lives of first responders. It is always best to check before starting a project to see if a permit is needed.

When do I need a building permit?

When in doubt, check with us if you need a permit. There are several minor types of work that do not require a permit. You need a building permit for all work except the following:

1. Fences not over 6 feet high.
2. Retaining walls not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall
3. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
4. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
5. Prefabricated swimming pools less than 24 inches deep
6. Swings and other playground equipment
7. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from that wall and do not require additional support
8. Shingle roofs but no more than two layers of shingles are permitted

I see someone doing work without permits. Who should I contact?

If you see someone doing work without a permit, you can contact our Supervisor of Inspections at 603-589-3080.

How long does it take to get my permit approved?

The length of time to get a permit varies based on the work you are planning to do and also how many corrections you have to make to your plans. Your project may require certain additional approvals, such as if you are near a wetlands area, or proposing a certain use that is not permitted in your zoning district. If you require no additional approvals and do not have many corrections to make, the typical length of time for a one family or two family building permit is two weeks. The typical length of time for a multi-family or commercial building permit is three to four weeks. The state requires that once we receive a complete application one or two family projects are reviewed in a 30 day time period and all others within a 60 day time period, so we are well within state requirements.

Certain permits may take less time while other larger projects may take more time. Residential electrical, mechanical and plumbing (like replacing a water heater) may take a day or two, or may be issued while you wait. Commercial electrical, mechanical, and plumbing can take a week or less, depending on the complexity of the project. On average, we receive a new project every hour (not counting electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits applications). Plans take anywhere from an hour to several days to review, depending on the scope and complexity. The plans examiner often has to respond to questions, request corrections and clarification, and investigate stop work orders, which is why it takes time to get your permit approved. Also be aware that once you get your permit, you must leave time for inspections, which will take additional time as you are in the midst of construction.

How much does a permit cost?

The cost of permits varies based on the anticipated work. All fees are found in the ordinances of the City of Nashua. For many projects, there is typically a filing fee, both for the land use portion of a permit and the building portion of a permit. Additionally, you are charged based on the square footage of the project. There may be additional fees such as impact fees, zoning variance fees, fees for minor home occupations, etc. For example, a residential permit for a deck that does not need any additional approvals from the Planning Department would cost \$25 for the minimum land use review fee, \$25 for the building application processing fee, and the minimum building fee of \$10 for a total of \$60. For more detailed fee information, please refer to each step in our guide. Land use fees are listed in step 2 and building fees are listed in step 3. Note that the fees do change over time based on new ordinances.

BASIC INFO

STEP 1: PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Read through this guide
- ☐ Meet with a member of our Building Department staff (call to set up an appointment)
- ☐ Prepare a plot plan or site plan (except for interior renovations)
- ☐ Gather construction documents

A good place to start planning your project is by reading through this guide to understand all the steps involved. Be aware that review of building permits takes time and money and you should take this into account when planning your project.

Different projects have different requirements. Replacing a water heater may only require a plumbing permit and no plans. Putting on an addition, deck, etc. will have additional requirements for documentation, including a plot plan and building plans. A new house requires a plot plan, construction drawings, a permit application, and other permits such as electrical, plumbing, and mechanical. Many of our forms are available online and are referenced in step 2 and step 3.

As you plan your project, call the City of Nashua Department of Building Safety (603-589-3080) to understand more fully what information you need to provide to us and if you are in doubt, ask us. We are here to help you make your project a success. The Department of Building Safety and the Planning Department are more than happy to meet with you at any point during the preliminary planning or any other point in the process. We ask that you call ahead to make an appointment.

What documents do I need?

There are certain documents that you may need as you prepare your application. For the Planning Department, you will need to provide a plot plan drawn to scale or a site plan except for interior renovations. For example, if you are putting in a pool, a shed, a deck, an addition, or anything that changes the footprint of structures on your property, you must provide a plot plan or site plan. New homes require a certified plot plan or subdivision site plan. You also should find out what zone your project is located in (which you can find out on our zoning map) to ascertain that it meets the requirements in that zone. Please refer to step 2 for more information.

In addition, you will most likely be required to provide construction plans to the Department of Building Safety. There are a number of requirements for these plans as well including not only floor plans, but sections, elevations, details, structural detail information, etc. Depending on the scope of the work, you may need an engineer and/or architect to create and certify the plans. More information is available in step 3.

Also be aware that you may need licensed individuals to do work on your project. There are certain types of work where the homeowner may choose to do the work themselves, but in cases where a electrician, plumber, or gas fitter is doing the work, you should make sure that they have an appropriate licenses. Refer to step 3.

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Find out what zone you are located in and the requirements (like setbacks, use, and open space) for that zone.
- ☐ Find out if you are in a wetland area and if so, what requirements you must meet.
- ☐ Find out if you are in the Historic District and if so, what requirements you must meet.
- ☐ Find out if you are in a floodplain area and if so, what requirements you must meet.
- ☐ Appear before one of our boards and commissions if necessary.
- ☐ Fill out our Land Use and Building Permit Application.
- ☐ Prepare a plot plan or site plan as part of the Land Use and Building Permit Application (if applicable).

Find our forms by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CDDFormsandStudies/tabid/1016/Default.aspx> Many of our forms are available as fillable PDFs.

One of the first considerations for a project is whether it meets the City's planning requirements. Planning requirements may include land uses, wetland impacts, whether you are in the historic district, setbacks from adjacent properties, etc.

STEP 2: GETTING APPROVALS FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Does your project meet the zoning requirements?

Nashua is split into several different zones which are denoted on a zoning map. The Land Use Code governs what uses are allowed in which zones. For example, some areas in Nashua have restrictions to prevent a landowner from building a multi-story office building in the middle of a purely residential neighborhood. There are also setback requirements so that in Nashua, you can't put a shed right on your lot line. This helps protect the quality of neighborhoods and the unique characteristics in different areas in Nashua. Most cities in the United States have restrictions similar to Nashua.

First, you should find out what zone your project is located in either by using the City's GIS (Geographical maps) system (input your address and look at the zoning map) or speak to someone in our office who can walk you through the process. GIS provides information on every property in the Nashua area, including owner, property value, and a variety of maps including aeriels, zoning, and parcel maps. GIS maps can be found at <http://citygisweb.nashuanh.gov/fl/nashuanh/main.html>.

After looking up your address, you should check whether the project or use you are proposing is allowed in that zone, the % of open space, if you are maintaining the correct setbacks from the lot lines, etc. based on Nashua's Land Use Code. Any project which is not just an interior renovation must meet these requirements, including decks, sheds, pools, additions, etc. In the planning of your project, you may want to adjust based on the requirements to avoid going to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) and other boards if possible. Members of our Planning Department can aid you in figuring out if your project conforms to our requirements.

If you don't meet these requirements, you can apply to the ZBA to receive approval by special exception or variance. Find more information about the ZBA by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PlanningDepartment/ZoningBoard/tabid/482/Default.aspx>.

Zoning Board of Adjustment Fees

Basic fee for a petition	\$330	
Applications with more than one request		\$200 per request
Basic fee for a use variance	\$900	
Basic fee for special exception petitions including:		
a) Filling floodplains	\$440	
b) Filling wetlands	\$440	
c) Planned business developments		\$440
d) Processing/removal of raw material		\$440
Abutter notification fee (any necessary postal fees plus \$3 per abutter)		

Does your project require going to the Planning Board?

For larger development projects which require site plans, conditional use permits, subdivisions, lot line relocations, consolidation plans or special use permits, you may be required to go before the Planning Board. These are often for large developments including new houses or other buildings and construction. Preliminary plan review costs \$500.00 and there are several requirements for submissions to this board. Please go to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PlanningDepartment/PlanningBoard/tabid/481/Default.aspx> for more information or set up an appointment with the Planning Department.

Are you in the Historic District in Nashua?

You can use the City's GIS system (input your address and look at the historic district map) or speak to someone in our office who can walk you through the process in order to find out if you are in the Historic District. If you are in the Historic District, you may need to go to the Historic District Commission for approval of your project. The commission's website lists what types of work require approval. The commission helps protect the architectural and historical integrity for many of the properties on Concord Street and the adjoining areas. To appear before the Historic District Commission costs \$30. Other fees and information are noted at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PlanningDepartment/HistoricDistrictCommission/tabid/484/Default.aspx>.

Are you in a wetland or wetland buffer area?

There are certain requirements for any buildings in wetland areas of Nashua in order to protect public waterways in the city. Use the City's GIS system (input your address and look at the wetlands map) or speak to someone in our office to find out if you are in a wetland or wetland buffer area. Doing any work, even removing trees and vegetation may require approval from the Nashua Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment or the State. Disposing of yard waste in the buffer zone is also unlawful. Your proposal may be within a development within an area covered by the NH Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. Fees for appearing before the Conservation Commission are \$110. For a site plan or subdivision that must appear before the Conservation Commission, the fee is \$275. Please go to the website for the Nashua Conservation Commission at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PlanningDepartment/ConservationCommission/tabid/483/Default.aspx> for more information.

Are you in a floodplain area?

Using your address and a FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map), it is possible to find out if the property is in a special flood hazard area (SFHA), such as the 100 year or 500 year flood zone. A member of our Planning Department can walk you through the process. If you are in a SFHA, you may need to provide additional information such as an elevation certificate (which is a FEMA form), include flood proofing, or other information to be in compliance. Please visit us at City Hall to learn more.

What do I need to do to put up a sign for my business?

Sign permits are available online and can be found by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PlanningDepartment/ZoningBoard/tabid/482/Default.aspx>. There is also additional information about procedures and documentation for the sign including sign type, wording and dimensions, location of the sign on the property, etc. Please be aware that there are limitations on how big your sign can be based on your zone and the size of your building. Check with a member of our Planning Department for more information. Lighted signs also require an electrical permit (see step 3). Depending on the sign, a member of the Planning Department and/or a member of the Department of Building Safety will review the application. Any sign that does not conform to the requirements can either be changed to conform or the applicant can go before the ZBA. The fee schedule for signs not requiring special approvals (and not including an electrical permit) is the following:

50 square feet or less	\$55
51 to 150 square feet	\$105
151 square feet and over	\$200

None of the above items apply to me. Do I have any other requirements from the Planning Department?

There are other requirements from the Planning Department in fulfillment of the Land Use portion of the Land Use and Building Permit Application. Besides filling out the application (which you can find by clicking here), a plot plan must be drawn to scale and/or a site plan is required for all applications except interior renovations. This allows us to know how far from your lot line, trees, or other structures your project will be located. For shed, decks, pools, and most additions, you can often use the resources of the department to know what your property looks like. Sometimes, there are plot plans of the existing property on file or you may be required to draw the plot plan. However, all new homes and buildings require a certified plot plan and/or site plan. In cases with substantial construction, you may be required to provide a certified plot plan and/or site plan. As mentioned, if you are doing interior renovations, you will most likely not require a plot plan. Examples of this type of work including renovation of the interior with no changes to the exterior, adding a water heater, replacing a toilet, etc. Visit City Hall or call the Planning Department (603-589-3090) for more information.

Other requirements may also apply, such as in the case of changing the use of a property. For example, you may be a new tenant fitting up a store on Main Street, starting a new restaurant in an existing building, creating a new office building, or opening a corner store in your neighborhood. All changes of use also require land use review and may require appearing at the ZBA if the use is not permitted in your zone.

There is other miscellaneous work which may also require a permit, including demolitions, voluntary merger of parcels, minor home occupation, etc. The fee for each permit type is listed below. Please note that the fees only reflect the fee for the land use portion of the permit, not the additional building permit fees.

Fees for the Planning Department

Residential minimum land use review fee (sheds, decks, pools, etc.)	\$25
Residential additions/alterations (other than new units)	\$55
Residential new unit (less than 4 units)	\$240 per unit
Commercial land use application fee or 25% of building permit fee, whichever is more	\$300
Change of Use	\$300
Demolition	\$50
Minor Home Occupation	\$30
Other	\$25
Voluntary Merger of Parcels	\$25
Zoning notification letter	\$50
Flood plain letter	\$25
Copy of Chapter 190	\$40
Map Reproduction	\$10
Duplication of public hearing tapes (first tape)	\$25 (if owner supplies tape, \$15)
Each additional tape	\$5
Subdivision plan review of individual sewage disposal systems, per review	\$20

STEP 3: GETTING APPROVALS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING SAFETY

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Fill out our Land Use and Building Permit Application.
- ☐ A licensed person may be required to pull the permit or be a contractor or owner and apply for the permit.
- ☐ Provide two (residential) or three (commercial) sets of construction documents which meet our requirements.
- ☐ Be prepared to answer any questions or provide new sets of drawings as determined by the Plans Examiner.
- ☐ Pick up and pay for your permit.

Find forms by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CDDFormsandStudies/tabid/1016/Default.aspx>

When reviewing plans, the Department of Building Safety checks whether your plans conform to codes published by the International Code Council. The purpose of these codes is to ensure safe building practices are used and buildings are built to minimum safety standards. We encourage you to go beyond the minimum standards and build more sustainable construction.

What types of permits do I need? What plans should I submit?

The most typical permit type is the Land Use and Building Permit. In step 2, we covered the basics of the land use portion of the permit. The other portion of this permit is the building portion. While the form is the same, the documentation that you must provide is different. On the City's website, we include a list of plan requirements that you should include, which varies based on the nature of the work. This includes plans, details, elevations, etc., all of which you can find by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/Permits/tabid/151/Default.aspx>. You must include building plans for most projects, including additions, large decks, and sheds. You must also include two sets of building plans for residential and three sets for multifamily and commercial with your application, one you will receive back with your permit card and the two others which will remain on file with the City. Call us or visit us at City Hall if you need additional information on what you should submit with your permit application.

Depending on the type and scope of work (typically for commercial work), you may need an engineer and/or architect to certify the plans or details. Architects are required for all projects except one and two family construction, alterations not involving structural changes, and some small projects. All information on these requirements can be found by referring to laws put forth by the State of New Hampshire.

Besides the Building and Land Use Permit, there are a number of other permits. We have residential and commercial electrical permits, mechanical permits, plumbing permits, demolition permits, and sign permits (see step 2 for more information on the sign permit). If you are replacing a water heater, rewiring part of your house, adding new outlets, etc, you need to fill out one of these permits.

There may be other instances where you need to not only fill out the Building and Land Use Application, but one of these permits as well. If you are building a new home, for example, you will need to fill out all the trade permits (electrical, mechanical, plumbing) in addition to the regular permit. If you are adding an in-ground pool, you need not only a building permit, but also an electrical permit. If you are putting on an addition to your house that includes a new bathroom, needs an outlet or new lighting, you will need to add one or all of the trade permits. If you are fitting up a new store, you will most likely need a building permit, the trade permits, a sign permit. To get more information, call us or visit City Hall. Copies of all permit applications can be found at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/Permits/tabid/151/Default.aspx>.

The Department of Building Safety also has a number of handouts which give specific information on different project types. For example, we have handouts on building decks, pools, finishing basements, and more. Go to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/InformationalHandouts/tabid/903/Default.aspx> for more information. For new and renovated residential and commercial buildings, you will also need to comply with the energy code, which has certain restrictions for R-value of insulation, Window U-factors, etc. Visit City Hall or call the Department of Building Safety for more information.

Please note that this information is specifically about permits from the Department of Building Safety, but you may need additional approvals and permits from other departments as listed in step 4.

What building codes do you use?

The Department of Building Safety evaluates all construction plans and permits based on codes accepted as part of the City's ordinances and State law. These codes are similar to the ones used by departments in other cities and states throughout the United States. You can find the ICC Codes online by going to <http://publicecodes.citation.com/icod/IC-P-2009-000019.htm>. The list of codes is the following:

2003 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (for the Fire Marshal's Office, please see step 4)
2009 International Building Code
2009 International Residential Code
2009 International Existing Building Code
2009 International Plumbing Code
2009 International Mechanical Code
2011 National Electric Code
2009 International Energy Conservation Code

How much does the permit cost?

To the right is a chart with all fees from the Department of Building Safety (not including the land use fees from step 2). Be aware that there are several components to the overall fee, the land use fee, the filing fee, and the actual fee per square foot (assuming no additional approvals are necessary). Other departments may have additional fees, so please contact their offices for that information.

Fees for the Department of Building Safety

Nonrefundable application processing fee	\$25
Minimum fee for miscellaneous equipment excluding the application fee (including residential antennas, small sheds less than 500 square feet, construction trailers, etc.) as deemed by the Building Official or Designee	
	\$10 (residential)
	\$35 (commercial)
New buildings, additions, mobile homes, in-ground swimming pools, basements, connecting structures, future expansion areas, areas capable of being used as living or occupiable spaces	
	\$0.11 per square foot (residential)
	\$0.20 per square foot (commercial)
LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standard buildings have a reduction in fee	
LEED Standard (5% reduction)	
LEED Silver (10% reduction)	
LEED Gold (15% reduction)	
LEED Platinum (20% reduction)	
Alterations, repairs, fire damage, renovations	
	\$0.06 per square foot (residential)
	\$0.11 per square foot (commercial)
Additional plan review for minor modifications including commercial tenant fit-up	
	\$0.03 per square foot (residential)
	\$0.07 per square foot (commercial)

Please note that these do not include all the fees listed by the Department of Building Safety. For a more complete list, please refer to our ordinance by clicking [here](#) or visit us in City Hall for a full schedule of fees.

How does the plan review process work?

When you apply for a Land Use and Building Permit, you should submit all documentation, including the land use information, any plans or drawings of your project, and the application itself. The land use portion of the application, as discussed in step 2, is reviewed by a planner in the Planning Department. The building portion of the application is reviewed by the plans examiner in the Building Department. There are many permit applications that the department must deal with and on average, the department receives eight new applications per day, with varying levels of complexity. The beginning of this guide gives an overview of how much time it takes to get a permit. Permits are processed in the order in which they are received. The planner and/or the plans examiner may contact you with questions about your application and ask additional questions or ask for a resubmission of plans if substantial corrections are involved. If, as the planner and plans examiner review your plans, they find that you do not meet the zoning stipulations, are in a wetland, or a historic district, etc. you will be required to get additional approvals, as was discussed in step 2. Multi-family and commercial permits also need to be reviewed by other departments as well. See step 4 for more information.

When the application has been reviewed by both parties, they will contact you to tell you whether or not the permit is accepted or rejected. There may be corrections which will be noted on the set of plans which will be returned to you. They will also tell you the fee for the permit when it is ready to be picked up. You may not start any building or construction until the permit has been approved and the fees have been paid. Also, if your building permit has been issued but the electrical permit has not been issued, for example, you cannot start the electrical work. Be aware that there are a number of inspections as part of the process, which are detailed in step 5.

For other types of permits such as electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits, one of the permit technicians, the plans examiner, or the inspectors will review the applications (the electrical inspector reviews the electrical permit applications, etc.). Be aware that there may be additional plans required for a permit depending on the scope of work. If you are only replacing a water heater or doing other limited work, a plot plan or other detailed plans will most likely not be required, but you still need to pull a plumbing permit. Please see step 2 of this guide for information specifically about sign applications.

How do I get a demolition permit?

For a demolition permit, there are a number of approvals beyond just the Department of Building Safety which must sign off on a demolition permit. These are covered in step 4. A copy of the permit with the necessary approvals can be found by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/Permits/tabid/151/Default.aspx>.

Do I need someone licensed to pull the permit and do the work?

As mentioned previously, you may need an architect's stamp or an engineer's stamp on your plans.

Anyone applying for an electrical or plumbing permit from the City of Nashua must possess a master's license. mechanical permits involving gas piping or equipment must be applied for by a person with the appropriate gas-fitters license. The only exception is if a homeowner is pulling a permit for their own work on their owner-occupied, single family dwelling which does not require a license.

STEP 4: GETTING APPROVALS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Check approvals requirements from other Departments in the City including the Fire Marshal, Environmental Health, and Engineering Departments.
- ☐ Get licenses as necessary from the State of New Hampshire.
- ☐ Make sure all approvals have been received prior to beginning work.

The Department of Building Safety and the Planning Department are only two of the departments that must sign off on your permit. For commercial or multi-family construction projects and new homes, you may need other departments to review your application before you can begin construction. In addition, your business may need licenses from the state in order to open to the public. Please visit us at City Hall for more information.

I'm building a new house. What other approvals do I need?

Sewer user permits are required for new homes, so you should contact the Public Works Engineering Department. You can visit them on the web by going to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PublicWorks/tabid/110/Default.aspx>.

I'm building a multi-family structure, a commercial building. Who else do I need approvals from?

As listed under the plan requirements, there are several other departments that you must contact. These include the Fire Marshal's office (located at 177 Lake Street, phone number 603-589-3460), the Environmental Health Department (located at 18 Mulberry Street, 603-589-4530, and the Department of Public Works Engineering Office (located at 9 Riverside Street, phone number 603-589-3090).

You can drop off your plans to be reviewed by the Fire Marshal at the Department of Building Safety (same location as where you drop off your construction plans). When you receive your permit, the Department of Building Safety will also collect the life safety review fee. Sprinkler and fire alarm permits are also secured through the Fire Marshal's Office. Go to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/FireMarshal/tabid/96/Default.aspx> for more information.

For food service, stores selling food, day care facilities, septic systems, and public swimming pools, the Environmental Health Department must review your application prior to permit approval. Plans and applications need to be delivered directly to their office. You can find out more about their requirements at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PublicHealthCommunityServices/tabid/109/Default.aspx>.

Sewer User Permits are required for new homes, adding additional plumbing fixtures in commercial buildings, or changes in use, you must contact the Public Works Engineering Department whose webpage can be found at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/PublicWorks/tabid/110/Default.aspx>.

What if I'm opening a day care, hairdresser, etc.? Are there State requirements?

Besides City approvals, you must also obtain a license from the State of NH. Check with the state to verify what you need to be licensed.

How do I pull a demolition permit (part 2)?

As mentioned in step 3, the first step for a demolition permit is to fill out the Department of Building Safety's form which can be found at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/Permits/tabid/151/Default.aspx>. You are also required to take pictures of the structure unless this requirement is waived by the Building Official such as in the case of a small shed, porch, etc. Other approvals that are required include National Grid, Pennichuck Water Works, PSNH, Comcast, Fairpoint, Fire Marshal's Office, Engineering Department, Environmental Health Department, Traffic Department, Street Department, and the Planning Department (or Historic District Commission). Come visit us at City Hall or give us a call to find out more.

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Check which inspections you need.
- ☐ Schedule an inspection one business day in advance.
- ☐ You may call the morning of the inspection to find out an approximate time.
- ☐ Have your permit card, plans, and a knowledgeable individual on site.

Once you've received approval for your permit, the next step is to get inspections done on your project. The purpose of getting these inspections is to make sure that your project is being constructed to code and that what was submitted for plan review and approved by the plans examiner is what is actually constructed. The Department of Building Safety keeps a list of inspections that are required which you can find at <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/BuildingSafetyDept/Inspections/tabid/419/Default.aspx>. If you do not have the permit card on site and do not have the plans on site, they will not inspect your project. The permit card allows the inspector to sign that the inspection is completed and the plans must be on site so the inspector can verify that the plans match what is being built. If you have questions, visit City Hall or call us to make sure you know which inspections you need to schedule.

STEP 5: GETTING INSPECTIONS ON YOUR PROJECT

When do I schedule an inspection?

Refer to the list for which inspections are required by clicking here. Be aware that you shouldn't start adding insulation or installing drywall before all your rough inspections are approved. Likewise, don't pour your concrete until after your deck footings have been inspected. Contact our department when in doubt.

Inspections must be scheduled at least one business day prior to the date you want the inspection done. They must be called in at 603-589-3080 before 4pm the day before. In other words, if you want an inspection on Wednesday, call on Tuesday between 8am and 4pm (as long as it's not a holiday). If our permit technicians are unable to answer the phone because they are working with another customer, you should leave a message on our answering machine with the permit number, type of inspection requested, the address of the project, and your contact information. Inspections are conducted between 9am to 4pm, Monday through Friday except on holidays.

How do I know what time the inspector will arrive? What should be on site?

Inspectors are in the office from 8am to 9am which is when they schedule their day. They will also answer any questions during that time. Usually, they cannot give you an exact time for when they will be there, but they should be able to tell you an approximate AM or PM time when they will be at your project. We ask that you call their direct lines which are all listed below. The inspectors visit projects between 9am and 4pm, Monday through Friday. Make sure that your permit card and the approved plans are on site; otherwise they will not sign off on the inspection. It is always best to have someone knowledgeable about the project on site to answer the inspector's questions.

Phone Numbers for the Inspectors

Supervisor of Inspections	(603) 589-3056
Building Inspector	(603) 589-3083
Electrical Inspector	(603) 589-3094
Mechanical Inspector	(603) 589-3118
Plumbing Inspector	(603) 589-3076

STEP 6: GETTING A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

CHECKLIST FOR THIS STEP:

- ☐ Meet all stipulations necessary after final inspections.
- ☐ Pay any additional fees as necessary.
- ☐ Get your certificate of occupancy.

There are some projects, like new buildings, tenant fit-ups, etc. which require you to get a certificate of occupancy before occupying or using the space. Many projects, like replacing a water heater, adding a deck, a shed, a swimming pool, etc. do not require a certificate of occupancy. After finishing your inspections, make sure all final inspections are completed and signed off.

Once I've finished my final inspections, am I ready to get a certificate of occupancy?

Just because you've finished your inspections doesn't mean you're ready to get your certificate of occupancy. There may be additional requirements that had been added as stipulations to the project along the way, whether it is the Planning Board or the ZBA who has placed stipulations on the project as part of site plan review. New homes also require that impact fees be paid. Make sure to verify that all inspections by the Department of Building Safety and the Planning Department, as well as inspections or sign-offs from other departments have all been completed. Every case is different, so make sure to visit us at City Hall or call us to make sure everything is completed before asking for your certificate of occupancy. Once you have done this, you're ready to get your certificate of occupancy which will be signed off by the Building Official or his or her designee.

After you get your permit, our services don't stop there.

Our website covers a variety of other services related to post-occupancy concerns. Our code enforcement department deals with issues related to complaints either by a tenant or a landlord. These include reports of bedbugs, overcrowding, dilapidated and unsafe housing, illegal signage, accumulation of junk and trash, wetland violations, and other unsanitary conditions. Please go to <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CodeEnforcement/tabid/163/Default.aspx> for more information.

Additionally, if you are a low-income homeowner, we have programs which can help you to address health and safety issues through low interest loans. Please visit <http://www.nashuanh.gov/CityGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/UrbanPrograms/tabid/457/Default.aspx>.

POST OCCUPANCY CONCERNS

This guide was a collective effort coordinated and constructed by Renee Reder who as always did an excellent job in creating this final product. The purpose of this guide is to give some insight and direction into the process of permitting for projects in Nashua. This guide is laid out so you can go to specific steps in the process if you don't wish to read the entire publication.

As Manager/Building Official of the Department of Building Safety and as Planner Director and Manager of the Planning Department, we want to emphasize that we are always willing to meet with you and review your project at any point in the process and encourage you to do so. We have found that those who take advantage of this opportunity enjoy a smoother and faster permitting process. You can drop by our office Monday - Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm for a consultation, but you may be better served by calling (603) 589-3080 and setting up an appointment to assure that the right people are available to answer your questions.

I hope that this guide proves to be useful and gives those who read it a better understanding of what is involved in the permitting process.

Regards,
Michael K. Findley AIA, CBO
Roger Houston, AICP